

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10

AID-05 /080 W

----- 036270

R 141150Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2784

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SAIGON 1747

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI VS

SUBJ: EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE RVNAF PERFORMANCE

REF : A) STATE 277526

B) SAIGON 1236

1. WE HAVE RECEIVED ANOTHER RECENT EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE RVNAF PERFORMANCE FROM OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN BIEN HOA. IT COVERS THE BATTLE FOR HOAID DUC IN BINH TUY PROVINCE, MR-3. THE FIGHTING BEGAN WITH A DECEMBER 10 NVA/VC ATTACK AGAINST TANH LINH. THE SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE OF HOAID DUC CULMINATED IN TWO RECENT ACTIONS. ON JANUARY 27, EIGHTEENTH ARVN DIV FORCES COMPLETED THE RECOVERY OF ROUTE 333 TO HOAI DUC AND A FEW DAYS LATER BUSES WERE OPERATING ON THE ROAD BETWEEN NATIONAL ROUTE 1 AND HOAI DUC. ON FEBRUARY 4, RVN FORCES EXTENDED THEIR DRIVE TO REASSERT GVN CONTROL OVER HOAI DUC DISTRICT TOWN BY OCCUPYING VO XU VILLAGE. IN THE SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE OF THE DISTRICT TOWN AND RECOVERY OF ROUTE 333, ELEMENTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH ARVN DIV WERE DEPLOYED AGAINST TWO NVA REGIMENTS WITH ANOTHER NVA REGIMENT NEARBY AT TANH LINH.

2. THE NVA/VC AIM IN THE DECEMBER 10 ATTACK WAS TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE HOAI DUC/TANH LINH RICE BOWL. THE AREA IS SIGNIFICANT NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT PRODUCES APPROXIMATELY 15,000 UNCLASSIFIED

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METRIC TONS OF RICE PER YEAR, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF ITS STRATE-

GIC LOCATION BETWEEN ROUTE 20 AND ROUTE 1. IN ADDITION, ONCE SEIZED, THE AREA WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RETAKE AS HOAI DUC AND TANH LINH ARE SITUATED AT THE END OF A SINGLE NARROW ACCESS ROAD IN A VALLEY SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. CONTROL OF THE AREA WOULD HAVE EXTENDED THE NVA/VC WAR ZONE D FROM PHUOC LONG TO WITHIN FORTY KMS OF THE SEA, AND WOULD HAVE PROVIDED A THREAT TO THE CONTINUED USE OF ROUTE 20 AND ONE.

3. FOLLOWING THEIR SEIZURE OF TANH LINH DISTRICT IN THE FIRST HALF OF DECEMBER, NVA/VC FORCES BEGAN THE SECOND PHASE OF THEIR OPERATIONS BY SHELLING HOAI DUC AND ATTACKING RVN POSITIONS ON ROUTE 333, THE ONLY ROAD LEADING INTO NORTHERN BINH TUY FROM THE SOUTH. OF THE FOUR VILLAGES COMPRISING THE HOAI DUC POPULATED AREA, SUNG NHON AND NGHI DUC FELL TO NVA/VC FORCES; VO XU CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK BUT WAS SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED BY LOCAL FORCES; AND THE MAIN VILLAGE OF VO DAT, WHERE DISTRICT HQS IS LOCATED, WAS LAID SIEGE TO BY AN NVA REGIMENT EMPLOYING HEAVY NABFS AND GROUND ATTACKS. REFUGEES TRAVELING NORTH TO PHUONG LAM DISCOVERED THAT THE NVA/VC WERE CHARGING UP TO 5000\$VN TO CROSS NUMEROUS CHECKPOINTS. ALONG ROUTE 333, ELEMENTS OF ANOTHER NVA REGIMENT SEIZED CHINH TAM HAMLET AND ERECTED MUD BARRIERS ACROSS THE ROAD, THUS PREVENTING ARVN UNITS IN GIA RAY FROM SUPPORTING THE BELEAGUERED TERRITORIAL FORCES DEFENDING VO DAT.

4. AFTER PRESIDENT THIEU PUBLICLY DECLARED THAT HOAI DUC WOULD BE HELD, A REGIMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH ARVN DIV BEGAN TO COUNTERATTACK, ENTERING THE AREA FROM ROUTE 20 IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE NORTH OF THE LA NGA RIVER AND HOAI DUC. ON JANUARY 2, THE EIGHTEENTH DIV COMDR, BG DAO, EMPLOYED A CRUDE HELIBORNE OPERATION (REPEATED TRIPS WITH A FEW UH-1'S) TO AIRLIFT A BN OF THIS REGIMENT OVER THE RIVER AND OVER AN NVA BLOCKING FORCE ON THE RIVER. THIS FORCE THEN ATTACKED THE NVA FORCES INVESTING HOAI DUC FROM THE REAR AND PUSHED INTO VO DAT TO JOIN ITS DEFENDERS. IN A SURPRISE MOVE, THE ARVN REGIMENT SET UP A BATTERY OF FOUR 105 MM AND FOUR 155 MM HOWITZERS NORTH OF THE LA NGA RIVER, TO PROVIDE ACCURATE SUPPORT.

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TING FIRE FOR THE VO DAT DEFENDERS. VNAF FLEW TWO HUNDRED TO THREE HUNDRED SORTIES OVER THE CITY PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT. IN HEAVY CONTACT AND OCCASIONAL HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, ARVN AND TERRITORIAL FORCES PENETRATED THE CITY. ON JANUARY 10, NVA/VC FORCES WITHDREW; HOWEVER, ONE OF THE RETREATING NVA REGIMENTS OCCUPIED VO XU ON JANUARY 13.

5.. AFTER VO DAT WAS SECURED, ELEMENTS OF ONE OF THE ARVN

REGIMENTS BEGAN CLEARING ROUTE 333 FROM THE NORTH DESPITE HEAVY RESISTANCE, WHILE ANOTHER ARVN REGIMENT MOVED UP FROM THE SOUTH. ON JANUARY 12, CHINH TAM HAMLET WAS RETAKEN. DESPITE CONTINUED RESISTANCE, ARVN WAS ABLE TO SECURE ROUTE 333 ON JANUARY 27. THE ROAD HAS NOW BEEN SUFFICIENTLY REPAIRED AND THE AREA MADE SECURE SO THAT BUSES ARE ONCE AGAIN SHUTTLING BETWEEN XUAN LOC AND VO DAT.

6. AS ROUTE 333 WAS BEING CLEARED, ARVN AND TERRITORIAL FORCES ALSO FORCED NVA/VC FORCES TO WITHDRAW FROM NGHI DUC AND SUNG NGON. ON FEBRUARY 4 ELEMENTS OF THREE RF BATTALIONS AND AN ARVN REGIMENT, SUPPORTED BY VNAF SORTIES, ATTACKED WELL DUG-IN NVA/VC POSITIONS AND RETOOK VO XU, THUS COMPLETING THE OPERATION TO HOLD HOAI DUC.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, PROGRESS REPORTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, MILITARY CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON01747
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750055-0808
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750241/aaaabkrc.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 277526
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE RVNAF PERFORMANCE
TAGS: MILI, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006